

Amendments to the Claims:

The following Listing of Claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims**Claims 1-18 (Cancelled)**

19. (Currently Amended) A Method of making a molded preform for use in an exhaust system component of an exhaust system of an internal combustion engine, the exhaust system component comprising two opposing metal walls defining a gap therebetween, with the molded preform being disposed in the gap, and a space through which exhaust gas may flow when the exhaust system component is used in an exhaust system of an internal combustion engine, said method comprising:

mixing water, a binder and chopped magnesium aluminium silicate glass fibers to form a slurry of insulation material;

~~providing a water removal system that comprises a screen through which water is removed by the water removal system;~~

providing a mold constructed to form a molded preform comprising the insulation material and being dimensioned so as to be positionable within the gap between the two opposing walls of the exhaust system component, with the mold having a screen through which water from the slurry is removed; and

processing the slurry to form the molded preform, said processing comprising disposing the slurry into the mold and removing the water from the slurry through the screen so as to form the molded preform by using the water removal system.

20. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 19, further comprising:

chopping magnesium aluminium silicate glass fibers, for use in the slurry, to an average length in the range of from greater than about 0.3 cm to less than 3 cm.

21. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 20, wherein the magnesium aluminium silicate glass fibers have a number average diameter of 5 μm or more and a length in the range of from about 0.5 cm to about 15 cm.

22. (Cancelled).

23. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 21, wherein the insulation material is comprised of at least 90% by weight of the magnesium aluminium silicate glass fibers.

24. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 21, wherein the slurry comprises organic binder material in an amount up to about 10 weight percent based on the weight of the insulation material.

25. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 21, wherein the slurry comprises organic binder material and one or more plasticizers.

26. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 24, wherein the slurry comprises inorganic binder material.

27. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 24, wherein the slurry further comprises an inorganic colloidal material, and said method further comprises:
forming the inorganic colloidal material in the slurry in the presence of the magnesium aluminium silicate glass fibers.

28. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 27, wherein the inorganic colloidal material is formed by adding two or more water soluble precursors to the slurry that combine to form a metal hydroxide.

29. (Cancelled)

30. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 19, wherein the removal of the water through the screen forms the molded preform is formed into a tubular shape suitable for use in a double-walled exhaust pipe of an exhaust system.

31. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 19 24, wherein the removal of the water through the screen forms the molded preform into is an end cone preform having a three dimensional conical shape with dimensions suitable for being inserted into and insulating an end cone region of a pollution control device, and the moldeed end cone preform maintains its three dimensional conical shape under the force of gravity after having been molded formed.

32. (Currently Amended and Withdrawn) A molded preform made by the method according to claim 19 34.

33. (Currently Amended and Withdrawn) A method of making an exhaust system component, said method comprising:

making a molded preform according to the method of claim 19 24;

providing a first metal wall and a second metal wall;

positioning the first and second metal walls so as to define between them a gap; and

positioning the molded preform in the gap between the first and second metal walls.

34. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 33, wherein the first metal wall is an inner housing and the second metal wall is an outer housing, and the inner and outer housings form an end cone region of a pollution control device.

35. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 33, wherein the first metal wall is an inner housing and the second metal wall is an outer housing, and the inner and outer housings form a double walled exhaust pipe.

36. (Withdrawn) An exhaust system component made by a method according to claim 33.

37. (Withdrawn) An exhaust system for use in a motor vehicle, said exhaust system comprising an exhaust system component according to claim 36.

38. (New) The method according to claim 19, wherein the insulation material is a non-intumescence insulation material.

39. (New) A Method of making a molded end cone preform dimensioned for use in an end cone region of a pollution control device, the pollution control device comprising a cone shaped inner housing and a cone shaped outer housing defining a gap therebetween, with the molded end cone preform being disposed in the gap, said method comprising:

mixing water, a binder and chopped magnesium aluminium silicate glass fibers to form a slurry of non-intumescence insulation material;

providing a mold constructed to form a molded preform comprising the non-intumescence insulation material and being dimensioned so as to be positionable within the gap between the inner and outer cone shaped housings of the pollution control device, with the mold having a screen through which water from the slurry is removed; and

disposing the slurry into the mold and removing the water from the slurry through the screen so as to form the molded end cone preform,

wherein the slurry comprises organic binder material in an amount up to about 10 weight percent based on the weight of the non-intumescence insulation material.

40. (New) The method according to claim 39, wherein the slurry further comprises an inorganic colloidal material, and said method further comprises:

forming the inorganic colloidal material in the slurry in the presence of the magnesium aluminium silicate glass fibers.